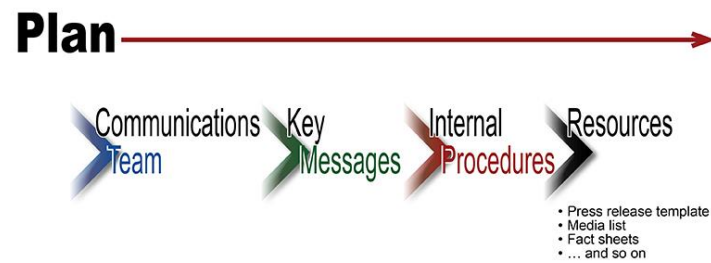# Crisis Communications

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ELEMENTS

Relevance:

Airline Emergency Response Ops - External / Internal Crisis Communications

PREAMBLE - you are advised to read the following notes before proceeding further

Note 1 - Fictitious (scheduled) **passenger** airline '**ABCX Airway**s' has been used to provide some 'context' herein. Said airline has been broadly based on a medium to large sized **UK** registered, headquartered / main based operator - and is an international carrier (including USA destinations). It can be assumed to be well resourced / supported etc. from emergency response planning contexts (e.g. manpower, budget, facilities, equipment, software, top management approval / support etc.)

Whatever applies to ABCX Airways herein may be regarded as also being applicable, to a greater or lesser degree, to other (medium to large sized) *scheduled* passenger airlines worldwide (and most other passenger carrying airlines e.g. charter and lease ops) - re emergency planning and response matters. However, there will be 'differences' - and it is for the 'interested' user to adequately account for same, when / if producing his / her / their own, associated emergency plans etc.

This document may be adapted for use by other aircraft operator types (e.g. cargo / executive / VVIP / rotary etc.). However, appropriate differences should be accounted for

Non-UK registered and / or non-UK main based operators should interpret and adapt this guideline / template accordingly and as applicable to their own specific circumstances. However, do consider that when operating to / from the UK, then some provisions documented herein will / may still be applicable / advisable e.g. those relating to the provision etc. of 'humanitarian assistance'

Note 2 - Most terms, abbreviations etc. used herein are *generic* i.e. **not** specific to any particular airline, airport etc. Whilst many (such terms etc.) will be the same / similar to those in actual (real / operational) use, the 'generic' use / nature of same herein should be accounted for accordingly

That is, when / if preparing an associated (**real**) emergency plan(s) based on **this** guideline / template - you should ensure that said generic terms are replaced with specific (**real** / **in-use** etc.) terms - as / if appropriate

Note 3 - This document has been predicated on ABCX Airways being able to deploy significant resources (including manpower, budget, facilities etc.) during a crisis response. This will obviously **not** be the case for some airlines etc.

For the latter, this document should be *adapted, downsized* etc. accordingly if / as required. Whilst this might not be easy to accomplish - it should nevertheless be 'done' to the best ability of the operator etc. - commensurate with e.g. top management support, available and adequate resources etc.

For 'Crisis Communications' type plans, ops etc. in particular - it might be possible to **outsource** some elements of the task - to appropriately qualified, experienced and specialist (i.e. aviation) reputation / crisis communications **consultants** (and / or equivalents)

Note 4 - The info presented herein has been ***** extracted from its (separate) **parent document** - the latter comprising around **192** pages. Thus what you read herein can be representative only of the associated 'big picture' found in said parent document

VERY IMPORTANT: ***** Page number cross-referrals (and similar) used in *this* 'information article' (the document you are reading right now) are typically reproduced **directly** (as is) from said *parent* document. They will thus **NOT** be relevant to / will 'not work' in *this* document i.e. the document you are actually reading right now

For the interested reader, the above referred to *'parent document'* can be found at:

https://www.aviationemergencyresponseplan.com/guideline-template/

When the associated webpage opens - scroll down until you find the heading:

'Airline - Catastrophic Aircraft Accident - Emergency Response Plan - ERP'

Look a little further down until you see:

* CRPM Part 1 (ERP) / Volume 9 - Crisis Communications

Click on the link to open and read the required document

IMPORTANT NOTE: - **Crisis related communications with / to / from surviving air accident *victims*** (*those who **had** been on board the accident flight*) **and their 'loved ones'** (*i.e. associated [**non-flying** {i.e. who had **not** been on board the accident flight}] family, relatives and friends -* **FR)** *should* (*as a major **crisis communications strategy** element*) **take priority over all other forms of crisis communication** - **unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise. Same applies to any surviving 'ground victims' and their own, associated FR**

Accordingly, the accident airline's 'crisis communications team' should work closely and consistently with all other appropriate parties / agencies (*internal and external*) **- which are providing humanitarian, welfare, financial, information and other assistance and support to such victims and their FR - in order to be able to effectively communicate such requirement** (*as per the paragraph immediately above*) **as the *PRIMARY* priority ………..and then** (*as a secondary priority only*) **address the 'needs' of the media and other interested parties**

Generic Acronyms used herein:

C4   (Emergency / Crisis related) Command, Control, Co-ordination and Communication Operations
CCC   Crisis Communications Centre
CCP   Crisis Communications Plan
CCT   Crisis Communications Team
CD   Crisis Director (Person charged with **overall airline crisis C4** - at the highest level)
CMC   Crisis Management Centre (highest level airline C4 *facility* - typically located at Airline HQ)
CPM   (ABCX Airways) - Crisis (Response) Planning Manager
CRPM   Crisis Response Planning Manual
CSU   Crisis Support Unit
ECC   Emergency (Telephone) Call / Contact /Information Centre
* **ERP**   (Aircraft Operator's) Emergency Response Plan (the latter is part of the overall CRPM)
FAQs   Frequently Asked Question (+ Answers)
HQ   Headquarters
LGT   Leader GO Team (person in overall charge of a deployed airline GO Team - reports to CD)
NOK   Next of Kin / Closest Relative / Equivalent Person
PR   Public Relations

AIRLINE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS (as related to a Catastrophic Aircraft Accident type situation)

DEFINITION: **Crisis Communications** (in the 'Passenger Airline' Context)

The art, science, technique, preparation, implementation, distribution etc. - of effective, efficient, expedient, accurate, consistent, co-ordinated, honest etc. *communications* - by an *air carrier* / *aircraft operator* (and / or the latter's accredited representative[s]) - with appropriate stakeholders (internal / external) ……………… relating to a * catastrophic aircraft accident type situation, involving one or more of said carrier / operator's aircraft …………… *or equivalent event*

* Crisis Communications can relate to all types of major crises of course. However, in *this* guideline / template, the subject is typically referred to in the '**catastrophic aircraft accident**' context <u>*only*</u>

Crisis comms should be delivered with care, compassion etc. as appropriate - particularly when communicating with / about accident victims and with associated family, relatives & friends of same

Note: Whilst airline (as a stakeholder) dealings with the *media* are 'traditionally' (arguably) considered to be paramount when conducting crisis communications - *all* other stakeholders *must* also be given due consideration. This is **particularly important** when communicating with / about aircraft accident victims and their associated (non-flying / had not on board the accident flight) family, relatives and friends. See again (if necessary) the important note found on the previous page

Foreword

This guideline / template document aims to provide a general knowledge level foundation concerning airline related 'crisis communications operations' - as associated with a **catastrophic aircraft accident** type scenario

It should be used by airline (and / or airline's parent group etc.) Corporate Comms / Public Relations (PR) departments (and any *associated* / *retained* PR Agencies; reputational consultants etc. world-wide) to assist in the production of a '**Crisis Communications Plan**' - designed to provide effective, efficient, expedient, accurate, consistent, co-ordinated and honest communications - with all of the accident airline's internal and external stakeholders

A primary purpose of Crisis Communications is to mitigate any adverse impact (of an associated crisis) on the airline's brand, image and reputation. Such mitigation should always be accomplished honestly, ethically and with the appropriate degree of care and compassion - circumstances 'on the day' so requiring / permitting

The ultimate aim, however, both in actual crisis response operations and in the associated crisis comms tasks, is to do the best job possible for **ALL** concerned stakeholders (but particularly for accident etc. victims and their associated family, relatives and friends)

A direct 'spin-off' of so doing (or otherwise) might be enhancement (or not) of relevant stakeholders' perceptions of how well the airline handled the crisis overall - with associated 'knock-on' impacts on whatever that might mean for the accident airline's 'future'

A related study on this subject matter ('**Protecting Value in the face of Mass Fatality Events**' - OXFORD METRICA; third report **2005** - link shown just below) indicates that a well handled crisis response can have positive, longer term financial implications for 'the airline involved' **BUT** - 'vice-versa' might also apply!

http://oxfordmetrica.com/public/CMS/Files/601/04RepComKen.pdf

There is also anecdotal information in general 'airline circulation' that even if a crisis is actually well handled operationally / practically by the associated airline etc. - *with the exception that the Crisis Communications element was not handled so well* (particularly concerning communications with media stakeholders), the *overall assessment* of the entire response re issues such as brand, image and reputation might be *perceived* as being well short of what it actually was in reality

Perhaps a more practical and accurate interpretation of this anecdote is that an airline's overall crisis response effort is made up of various components of varying importance. There can be no doubt whatsoever, from hard, historical evidence, that 'crisis communications' is one of the more important (but not necessarily *the* most important) components

Accordingly, this document (you are reading it now) outlines the general, crisis comms type requirements used to guide all appropriate ABCX Airways staff (plus any contracted / associated [external] PR agencies and / or reputational consultants etc. worldwide - as relevant) responding to a catastrophic aircraft accident type crisis involving the airline - and / or - where appropriate, any partner airline (alliance; code-share; lease / charter; mutual emergency support etc.)

All Corporate Communications / PR staff (plus contracted / associated PR agencies / reputational consultants) need to be familiar (**excellent** working knowledge) with the contents / requirements of this document (the one being read now!). They must also be similarly familiar with the various roles / responsibilities which they will invariably be required to perform - in the event of an actual catastrophic aircraft accident (or similar impact crisis) directly or indirectly involving ABCX Airways

The above paragraph also applies to **all** members of the airline's senior management team

Furthermore, the world-wide, real time nature of ABCX Airways flight ops - means that 'crisis comms' must never be the sole responsibility of the 'professional' corporate comms / PR team at airline HQ e.g. such responsibility (to an appropriate, delegated [and closely controlled] degree) extends to all locations on the airline's network - and to pre-nominated (appropriately trained and exercised etc.) persons at such locations

Accordingly, the airline's 'top manager' shall ensure that all such pre-nominated persons at all such locations are competent (appropriately trained), proficient (exercised) and adequately resourced etc. in this matter

Lastly, all ABCX Airways Corporate Comms / PR staff might be called upon to undertake tasks as outlined herein - possibly *regardless* of their normal business 'specialist' responsibilities. Whilst it is hoped that they will never be called upon so to do - each and every one has, nevertheless, a duty to be 100% prepared accordingly

Introduction & Overview

To reiterate what has already been stated several times so far, adequate communication (i.e. effective, efficient, expedient, accurate, consistent, co-ordinated, honest [and caring / compassionate where so required]) is a major component of any airline's overall crisis /emergency response planning operation. It is said anecdotally that:

'If an airline doesn't adequately manage its 'communications' during a major crisis (especially with the media) **- then no one will know how well the airline is _actually_ handling the crisis itself'**

The PR (media) response to a major crisis can have a significant impact on how the airline 'recovers' (or not) post-crisis. The agenda for what happens during and in the aftermath of a catastrophic aircraft accident is now so easily set by 24H global media type communications. It is the responsibility of the ABCX Airways Corporate Comms / PR team to ensure that this does not happen

Note - for the sake of brevity the term 'Crisis Communications Team - **CCT**' will often be used throughout the remainder of this document, in place of the words 'ABCX Airways - Corporate Communications / PR team'

Note - for the vast majority of airlines, the CCT will generally comprise the _entire_ Corporate Communications / PR department / business unit - particularly if personnel / staff resources are minimal

The primary aim of the ABCX Airways CCT, in responding to a catastrophic aircraft accident type crisis, is to protect the airline's brand, image and reputation etc. by ensuring that said airline is perceived _(and actually is)_ as handling the incident with the required control, competence, care, compassion, honesty etc. This might best be achieved by:

- Competently and quickly providing / updating accurate, authoritative and appropriate levels of information to the media, employees, victims and latters' associated family, relatives & friends (**FR**) - together with other appropriate stakeholders e.g.

    o   Be fast, open, accurate and honest with information and / or lack of information
    o   Generally speaking - 'always put accident victims and / or their FR first'
    o   Anticipate what the media (and similar) are going to say - and act on it
    o   Anticipate what the media (and similar) are going to want - and act on it ………… etc.

- Providing PR advice to colleagues within the airline (or associated closely with the airline e.g. contracted / associated PR Agents; airline representatives at airports etc.), to assist them in the overall handling of the incident or issue etc.

- Providing an **initial** (holding) **press release** as soon as possible post crisis occurrence - **definitely within one hour or less**

- Adopting an **attitude** of **zero** response time. There should typically only be a very short time period between a catastrophic aircraft accident occurrence and the initial media response.

    With the 'state' of the media today it is reasonable to assume that they (the media), the public etc. might typically become aware of 'the' crisis well _before_ the airline

Following release of the initial (holding) press release, updated information should be subsequently distributed at regular intervals - with press releases expected to be issued around every hour or two (and possibly at even shorter intervals) during the early phase of any major crisis

Press conferences will typically be arranged jointly (if appropriate and depending on where the crisis has taken place) with e.g. relevant airport authorities, police, other emergency services, government level agencies etc. - with the aim of having the first press conference **within two to three hours** of actual crisis occurrence or otherwise as soon as possible

The airline may need to hold the first press conference alone if other parties involved will not be in a position to participate at that time – but, as a minimum, such parties should at least be consulted prior to such action, if possible / practicable so to do

Where / when appropriate, at least one member of the CCT (possibly more depending on circumstances) will deploy as part of any ABCX Airways '**Go Team**' - and will then be responsible for overseeing the airline's 'local' (on-site ' local etc.) crisis communications response operation

Suitably trained and selected company **spokespersons**, of sufficient seniority and / or experience and with the appropriate 'skills' etc. will typically be the 'face and voice' of the airline at 'home country' press conferences; media interviews; public meetings etc. - generally (but not always) based on the principle of 'the more serious the crisis, the more senior the spokesperson'

A separate (similarly trained and selected) spokesperson (if appropriate / available) should deploy as part of any airline **GO Team**

Media interviews (via TV, radio, telephone etc.) should be arranged on an 'as required / as requested' basis

It must be clearly understood that media and public interest in an ABCX Airways catastrophic aircraft accident will be global and not just limited to the country (countries) where airline headquarters and / or the accident site are located

A vital contribution to successful crisis comms will be pre-acquisition and effective use of the internet and similar 'modern / up to date' technology

Following a catastrophic aircraft accident, the normal ABCX Airways website(s) will probably be converted to a pre-planned / pre-prepared '**Dark Site**'. This site will be constantly updated with e.g.

- The latest press releases
- Essential information for public and (separately) media use in contacting the airline
- A selection of 'fast facts' sheets, FAQs etc.

The use of '**social media**' etc. is today a vital 'weapon' in the Crisis Communications 'arsenal'.

<p align="center">**Airlines ignore it at their peril!**</p>

DEFINITION - **Dark Site**

A dark site is typically part of a 'crisis communications strategy' (see 'definition' of latter - page 37), used by appropriate organisations (including airlines) - whereby a purpose built (and / or adapted) and largely pre-prepared (but typically unpublished) 'crisis information' **web site** is 'stored' - until such time as it is required to be promoted to the live web, usually in the aftermath of a major crisis

Dark sites are typically developed for areas of known risk or vulnerability to an organisation e.g. for an airline a dark site might be used as part of the crisis comms response to a 'catastrophic aircraft accident' type scenario; for better management of extreme operational disruption etc.

Airlines particularly use dark sites for the provision of timely and (hopefully) accurate information to those directly and / or indirectly affected by the crisis (typically accident victims for the former - and their associated (non-flying) family, relatives and friends for the latter) and, of course, also to the media and public in general

In addition to versions of the dark site being published in the 'home language' of the 'crisis' airline, strong consideration should be given to also using appropriate languages related to the (main) target audience(s) of the dark site e.g. for the (real) Air France fatal accident in the Atlantic off Brazil (**AF 447** - 31 May / 01 June 2009) the numerical mix of nationalities actually on board would have typically required dark site information presented in **at least** *French, Portuguese, German & English!*

Much (but not all) of the information published to a typical airline dark site post-crisis can only be prepared and added in the shorter term - just before release to the live site (e.g. the passenger and crew lists). However, information e.g. relating to technical details of an aircraft type involved in an accident and similar can (and should) be **pre-prepared** - and thus be immediately available to insert onto a dark site, if required (e.g. as part of 'fast facts' / FAQs)

Note that an airline's '**normal business**' website(s) should typically still be accessible in some way during concurrent 'Dark Site' ops. This is typically accomplished by clicking on an appropriately labelled link shown somewhere on the Dark Site webpage itself - or similar arrangement

As a mark of respect to crisis victims and others adversely involved, dark sites typically contain zero, / minimal branding; no advertising; plain, grey (or similar colour) background (hence the term 'dark site') etc.

For more information on dark site type crisis communications - see Appendix C (page 129)

DEFINITION - Social Media

Some of the better known Social Media sites are 'Twitter & 'Facebook'. There are many more

The use of Social Media has rapidly augmented use of the 'dark site' as one of the primary tools for '*pushing* (sending / transmitting / publicising etc.)' crisis comms by an organisation (airlines in this case) 'in crisis'

It can also be used as a supplementary tool to *respond* to **public** type enquiries ('*pulled* [received]') at time of crisis (i.e. supplementing [*but never replacing*] an airline's 'emergency [telephone] call / contact / information centre' [ECC])

Whilst crisis response use of Social Media should be considered a powerful, economical and essential tool - its misuse can have adverse impacts on the various aspects of the crisis communications operation which it is meant to enhance

For example, if used to *respond* to *public* enquiries, it is imperative that enough competent and exercised 'operators' man the Social Media function, so that meaningful 'information exchange' takes place without undue delay. This can be very 'manpower intensive' at a time when such trained / exercised resources will almost certainly be scarce / non-existent

Again, if used to respond to *public* enquiries, it is imperative that an effective, efficient and consistent (cohesive / co-ordinated) data exchange system operates between the Social Media function & e.g. those of *other* information gathering / dissemination entities *within the airline* - e.g. the emergency (telephone) call centre, the crisis command & control centre, the dark site etc.

Similar considerations to the above apply to using Social Media for crisis comms directly with the '*media*' themselves

Lastly, have another look at the language requirements / considerations for the 'dark site' shown on the previous page. Similar will also apply to 'social' type communications

For more information on social media type crisis communications - see Appendix D11 (page 158)

WARNING - *Social networking / media aspects (and similar) of crisis communications must now be considered a **VITAL** (repeat - **VITAL**) element of an airline's overall crisis communications strategy*

You might also find the info (at the end of the link below) useful:

https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/iceland.pdf

More points for consideration:

- During the early stages of a major crisis the media tend to fill any 'information vacuum' using their own 'resources' - even if this means straying somewhat from the truth! This must not be allowed to happen!

- If 'we' get things wrong, then we **MUST** admit it. The media will 'find out' sooner or later anyway and it will help our credibility if we advise them accordingly before someone else does. If the media think we are hiding information, they will do everything they can to find out what it is and could use it against us

- We must constantly keep in mind that we are not the only people trying to influence the media - there will be many other interested parties wanting to get their messages across e.g. airframe and engine manufacturers, lawyers, politicians, families and family rights groups, aviation 'experts' - even sovereign 'countries'!

- We cannot allow ourselves to become diverted by 'speculation'.   During a crisis, there will always be speculation - we must ensure that we provide only facts

- As already mentioned, if we 'don't know' - we need to say so up front and in good time. But we also need to reinforce that we will endeavour to find a speedy answer to '*what it is that we don't know*'

- Internal (employee / staff) communications are just as important as external comms. Uncertainty within a company can paralyse it. The CCT is responsible, in conjunction with appropriate ABCX Airways Crisis Support Units (e.g. Flight Operations; Cabin Crew; HR), for accurate, speedy, reliable and co-ordinated *internal* communications

   Concurrent with the crisis response, the majority of the airline's flight network will / might still be operating 'normally' - and thus employees / staff / agents etc. world-wide will be facing questions from passengers and other interested parties - e.g. travel agents, airport based airline representatives (such as GHAs) etc. (and probably from the local media also). It is essential, therefore, that **internal** communications are kept as *up to date and co-ordinated with consistent information* - as those provided to the media / externally

   Specialist airline personnel, e.g. pilots and cabin crew, may be concerned about their own safety operating an aircraft similar to the one involved in the accident - and may consequently need specific briefings and support. Where appropriate (e.g. at the accident airport) our airline reps (e.g. ground handling operators) must also be included in our internal communications efforts

- It is vital that all employees / staff (from the airline's top manager down to the 'tea boy') clearly understand that only a very small number of nominated persons within the airline are trained and authorised to speak to or otherwise communicate with the media. This applies at any time - but particularly so during a major crisis response

   Those authorised to speak to the media typically include any / all of the appointed airline spokesperson(s); nominated members of the CCT; nominated airline Country / Area / Regional managers and, where considered appropriate, nominated third party PR agencies and / or 'reputation experts' under contract to the airline

All of the above should have attended appropriate courses of initial and recurrent training (and be currently exercised) and / or have an appropriate, current professional qualification and / or have appropriate, current and acceptable experience of 'what is required'

In extremis, the Leader GO Team and nominated ABCX Airways station managers may be authorised to speak to the media - but only under circumstances strictly controlled by the Crisis Management Centre and Crisis Communications Centre at airline HQ

ABCX Airways employees / staff members etc. approached by the media for comment on a crisis - should politely refer them (the media) to any of the above, as appropriate. To ensure that this is done (and done correctly) the airline runs regular information 'campaign's on the subject - which will be intensified during actual, crisis response ops

▪ An airline's legal department is an integral component of crisis communications - from the viewpoint of 'legally' advising on and clearing all written communications before release.

Same applies (insofar as is practicable) for other forms of crisis comms e.g. the drafts and agenda of spokespersons' briefings (prior to e.g. giving a press conference or TV interview etc.) should be similarly scrutinised

However, a conflict could (and often does) *arise between the prudence of saying as little as possible from a legal viewpoint - and the professional inclination of PR people to do the opposite*. There will always be some form of 'ideal' compromise solution (depending on actual circumstances 'on the day' of course) and appropriate policy, joint training and exercising - combined with effective leadership - should assist in ensuring that the correct (most beneficial) compromise is chosen 'on the day'

> THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS 'UNDERSTANDING' BY THE AIRLINE's CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS AND LEGAL TEAMS *CANNOT BE OVERSTATED*

▪ **The crisis communications roles / responsibilities as shown in this plan are clear. Official job titles, descriptions etc. should be flexibly interpreted and applied, as the external world will typically not care who anyone is / what they do during 'normal' business!**

▪ ……………… and lastly, remember above all the value of the media in *assisting* an airline with many aspects of its crisis comms task e.g. from very quickly getting essential info to targeted recipients (such as family, relatives and friends of accident victims) - to contributing to the preservation of the brand, image and reputation of the airline via positive reporting, (where [in the eyes of the media at least] such credit is due of course)

Provided that an airline is competent in its crisis response efforts and deals effectively, efficiently, expeditiously, accurately, consistently, honestly etc. with the media - then the latter should be regarded as a *positive asset* rather than the 'traditional', negative role

Of course, get it wrong and the power of the media is such that even the viability of an airline to 'exist' can be severely impaired

Crisis Comms in 2 Easy Pages!

Whilst this guideline / template will provide much of the necessary guidance in the required detail – for producing a 'fit for purpose' Crisis Communications Plan (CCP), it can actually be 'roughly' summed up in just two pages. Note that *most* steps below require / involve *pre-preparation*:

I. Whilst the first step might seem to be the need to produce a written Crisis Communications Plan (CCP) - *we actually need 'people' first*. People who can brainstorm what the CCP should cover (scope); write it; review it; rewrite it; obtain consultation and feedback on it; resource and budget it; get top management approval for it; produce the final version; distribute and publicise it; train it, exercise it; maintain it; review it; champion it etc. Lastly, these same people will almost certainly implement (put into action) and operate said plan in response to a real crisis

In *this* guideline / template the 'people' referred to above are assumed to be drawn primarily from the ABCX Airways Corporate Comms / PR Department - as supplemented by external (3rd party) crisis comms subject matter experts, if so required

II. The next step requires *production of the plan itself* - along the lines of the sequence already documented immediately above

III. Thirdly, *train and exercise* all concerned in using the completed CCP in their various crisis response functions. An associated recurrent (refresher) training and ongoing exercise system must also be implemented. Associated documented records of same must be maintained

IV. *Whilst all of the above is going on* - identify and put together a *team of senior or otherwise 'appropriate' managers to carry out the role of* '**airline spokesperson**' at time of crisis. Arrange appropriate training (initial and recurrent) and an exercise programme (ongoing) accordingly. It is desirable that the airline's top three managers be part of this team. However, subordinate staff with appropriate 'attitude, ability and capabilities' should also be considered. Training for same might best be delivered by external 'professional / expert' third parties e.g. reputation consultants

> Note: - Such spokespersons are not only needed for press statements / conferences, but also for many other types of face to face crisis comms e.g. 'on-camera / TV' interviews, radio interviews, telephone interviews, internal comms briefings, other stakeholder comms, at public and employee meetings etc.

V. *Whilst all of the above is going on* - procure, set up, document, train in and test (exercise) an **internal** '*alerting & activation*' system for the CCT

VI. *Whilst all of the above is going on* - identify and document all **potential stakeholders** (individually and / or by group) together with **full contact information** (i.e. consider every possible method of contacting same). Then come up with a fool-proof method of keeping said list current. Remember that the 'media' is a stakeholder - as are employees / staff

VII. *Whilst all of the above is going on* - establish suitable '**notification systems**' - permitting rapid and reliable comms with all appropriate stakeholders, during crisis response ops

VIII. *Whilst all of the above is going on* - the entire CCT should be brought together at fairly frequent intervals in order to **brainstorm the types of potential crisis comms problems** which might feasibly arise during an actual catastrophic aircraft accident crisis response

Once done - they should then further **brainstorm the associated solutions and / or mitigations** *(including appropriate strategies and key messages etc.)*, designate who will respond to them and how - and document same accordingly e.g. in the CCP typically in the 'procedures' and / or 'checklist' section(s)

Where no acceptable solution to a particular problem is apparent (this will be quite rare) - clearly document same in the CCP and also bring it to the attention of top management. This then becomes a '*risk management*' problem - and that is a whole different story!

IX. *Whilst all of the above is going on* - develop / document suitable and appropriate '**holding**' *(and the next two or three subsequent)* **Press Release** *templates* - fit for near immediate and / or rapid issue following declaration of a major crisis. Such templates *must* be developed *in advance* - for use in a wide variety of scenario types to which the airline is perceived to be vulnerable, based on the assessment conducted as per Step VIII above. An example of a typical airline **holding** (first) press release might be as simple as:

Date: [insert]   Time: [insert]   Press Release No: [insert]

A possible incident has been reported today (date) **involving Flight AB xxx from** (departure airport**) to** (destination airport)**. We have activated our / ABCX Airways emergency response procedures as a precaution. Our primary concern right now is for all on board this flight and their** (non-flying) **families, relatives and friends**

More information will be released ASAP - see also www.abcxairways.com +

Templates for *subsequent* press releases should also be *pre-prepared* where thought prudent / possible. The CCT should regularly review same to determine if they require revision and / or whether press releases for other scenarios should also be developed

X. Pre-plan and resource accordingly for effective/ efficient 'emergency related' use of the *company website* and similar **dark site, social media etc.** operations)

XI. During *actual* crisis response operations - select / formulate an appropriate **crisis comms strategy**; implement it; assess and continually re-assess it and use the CCP and said strategy (see page 37) to **guide** the appropriate response

Note very well that the CCP must only be considered as a guide to an appropriate response. It can never make up for human leadership, flexibility, initiative, common sense, logic, knowledge, experience etc. - all of which (and more) **will be critical to successful outcomes 'on the day'**

Corporate Comms / PR Department - **Summary of Main Roles / Responsibilities**

GENERAL i.e. pre-planning

- 24H capability to take / react to **Red Alert** (catastrophic aircraft accident) message
- Establish own *internal* crisis alerting & activation system
- Prepare, document and maintain required Crisis Communications Plan(s) (CCP)
- Resource (incl. manpower), establish & equip a 'fit for purpose' Crisis Comms Centre
- Establish a pool of (appropriately trained and exercised) airline spokespersons
- Prepare / maintain a 'Crisis Contacts Directory' for **all** appropriate stakeholders
- Develop templates for press releases/statements/sympathy & condolence letters etc.
- Pre-prepare appropriate 'fast facts' and FAQs
- Ensure viability, stability, capacity etc. of web servers to be used for 'dark site' ops
- Establish a 'social media' capability e.g. TWITTER (now 'X'); FACEBOOK etc.
- Establish 'trained volunteer' pool to man airline's 'Press Office' call centre functions
- Establish 'trained volunteer' pool to man airline's 'social media' functions
- Train / exercise in the appropriate procedures, checklists etc. contained in the CCP
- Identify and apply 'lessons learned' post exercises and actual crisis / crises

SPECIFIC i.e. during actual crisis (or exercise)

- Activate the Crisis Communications Team & Crisis **Communications** Centre
- Invoke the Crisis Communications Plan
- Deploy Crisis Communications Controller to Crisis **Management** Centre (CMC)
- Provide expert advice and support to the Crisis Director and CMC team
- Ensure ICT (internet / comms etc. technology) support for Crisis Comms Centre
- Initiate & maintain press release writing (+ other written communications) tasks
- Initiate, maintain & prioritise comms with 'victims' + 'family, relatives & friends' etc.
- Initiate & maintain *external* (media type) communications - (Including operation of a 'press office' to liaise with the media etc.)
- Initiate & maintain *internal* communications
- Initiate & manage on-line content (including activation & use of dark site)
- Initiate & manage social media etc. communications
- Ensure *strict co-ordination* & *consistency* across all types of crisis comms
- Provide media / press / on-line monitoring function
- Provide TV & radio bid function
- Provide, advise & support spokesperson(s)
- Contribute specialist manpower to GO Team (as appropriate)
- Deploy & direct use of contracted third parties e.g. PR agents; reputation experts etc.
- Arrange for translation / interpretation services - as required
- Provide administrative support to Crisis *Communications* Centre
- Maintain log of events throughout crisis (applies to *each* appropriate section of CCT)
- etc.

Note 1 - 'CCT' = Crisis Communications Team (already discussed earlier in this document)
'CSU' = Crisis Support Unit (see Chapter 2A - page 39)

Note 2 - Amongst many other things - the Crisis Communications Plan should always include:

- A pre-prepared * **crisis communications strategy / strategies** based on the most likely known threats / risks etc. (* see definition further below)
- Pre-prepared ** key messages based on the most likely known threats / risks (** see note 1 to appendix D12 of this guideline / template document [page 168])
- Appropriate pre-prepared templates for press releases / statements / sympathy and condolence letters etc.
- A current and comprehensive list of potential FAQs / Fast Facts
- A current and 'fully fit for purpose' crisis contacts directory

Definition - **Crisis Communications Strategy**

An overall strategy (high level plan) developed to provide guidance / direction to an airline's crisis comms efforts. When formulating such strategy consider / respond to the following issues:

* What do you want 'people' to know?

* Which audiences are being targeted?

* How do you intend to communicate?

* When do your messages need to get out (be delivered)?

Some essential 'tools' for use in this task include:

* Key messages

* Pre-prepared questions and answers

* Press releases / statements (some can be formulated using *pre-prepared* templates)

* A practical timeline of what should be done, when and in which order

It is advisable to base a series of *pre-prepared* crisis comms strategies re the most likely 'worst case crisis scenarios' envisaged by the airline i.e. those in which public / media interest will be very high - with the commensurate risk to brand, image and reputation if not handled effectively, efficiently, competently and compassionately

Such scenarios must include the 'catastrophic aircraft accident' type situation - but might also address e.g. a major public health related crisis (e.g. the 2020 - 2022 COVID-19 pandemic); a disastrous business continuity issue (e.g. the volcanic ash crisis in N Europe of 2010) etc.

During *actual* crisis response ops - one of said pre-prepared strategies might be used / adapted - if considered suitable. Alternatively, it might be necessary to create a 'new' strategy from the ground up - based on actual circumstances 'on the day'. The disappearance of Malaysian Airlines flight MH 370 (March 2014) is a good example of where this latter might have applied - as no one could have ever logically / feasibly come up with such a scenario, in advance

The (Corp Comms / PR Department / Business Unit) - **Crisis Support Unit** (CSU)

Take a look at the following definitions:

*C*risis *S*upport *U*nit (CSU)

Nominated elements of ABCX Airways departments / business units (generally airline HQ based), having identified and direct and / or indirect roles to play (corresponding to the department / business unit's '*normal*' operations roles, responsibilities and accountabilities) when responding to a catastrophic aircraft accident - or similar impact crisis

All CSUs should provide a 'rotating' (crisis response trained, exercised and competent) person (contactable 24H) - for *potential* crisis response duties and / or related specialist advice *specific to that particular CSU*

For the appropriate 'contactable period' assigned (suggested as weekly) the incumbent should be:

- contactable by telephone 24 / 7 / 365 (mobile phone & / or landline [office & / or home])
- know what to do when contacted / alerted
- be in a fit state to do what is required (or pre-appoint a CSU substitute if indisposed)
- be located within a *reasonable* travelling time of reporting location - or wherever the particular CSU's crisis response duties need to be enacted

Note: The term 'reasonable' is not defined but should be interpreted logically / sensibly - accounting e.g. for the prevailing traffic / road conditions at various times of the year. Guidance would suggest that **'within 2 hours *normal* travelling time'** might be an appropriate timeframe

CSU Representative / Alternate Representatives

A suitable person(s) appointed by a department / business unit Head / equivalent - charged with origination, implementation, maintenance, review and training in / exercising of that department's / unit's own CSU Emergency Response Plan (ERP)

Note: The Corporate Communications / PR Department CSU's equivalent name for *its own* ERP is:

'**Crisis Communications Plan**' - (**CRPM Part 1 / Volume 9**)

The person(s) so appointed shall be considered to be (will become) department / business unit "expert(s)" on all crisis response matters concerning same - and will serve as the primary departmental / business unit link with the ABCX Airways Crisis (Response) Planning Manager (CPM)

A *minimum* of one alternate (back-up) rep (to the primary CSU rep) should be appointed (manpower permitting). More may be appointed if so desired / practicable / available and, if this is done, will positively assist with the acquisition of knowledge (re crisis response etc.) and spread of workload and responsibilities within the CSU i.e. in general the more 'alternate reps' the better

Key Accountabilities /Tasks for the **Corporate Comms / PR CSU** (Crisis Comms Team - CCT) include:

- Act as CSU prime liaison with the airline's Crisis Response (Emergency) Planning Manager
- Ensure Crisis Communications Plan is produced, implemented & maintained
- Establish & maintain own department / business unit's *internal* alerting & activation system
- Ensure that CSU 'contactable' (on-call) requirements are met on a 24 / 7 / 365 basis
- Attain 'expert' status on all relevant crisis response matters concerning the CSU / CCT
- Establish and maintain an initial and recurrent CSU / CCT training programme
- Establish and maintain a system to validate / test CSU / CCT crisis response plans (exercises)
- Maintain documented records & reports - especially concerning training & exercises
- Provide expert input into CCT's response during *actual* emergency ops - and during exercises
- Identify and apply 'lessons learned' following exercises or actual crisis

Note:

The primary role of the Corporate Communications / PR CSU (Crisis Communications Team - CCT) is to fully *pre*-*prepare* the department / business unit for crisis / emergency response duties - i.e. implementing (or arranging same) all of the '*GENERAL*' (pre-planning) bullet point listed items shown in the table on page **36**

DO NOT CONFUSE THE *CSU* WITH THE *CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS TEAM. Pedantically* the former operates in *pre*-*preparation* for a crisis, whilst the latter generally forms and operates *during* actual crisis response ops

However, it is logical (and probably necessary e.g. due lack of manpower) in most airlines that Corp Comms / PR **CSU** staff should / must also take on key roles in the **CCT** itself during *actual* crisis response ops - and this should be planned for accordingly, as appropriate (again, there will be little or no choice in this matter for airlines with limited manpower resources)

Accordingly, the terms 'Corporate Communications / PR Crisis Support Unit' and 'Crisis Communications Team' as used in *this* guideline / template document (the one you are reading now) may be generally understood as 'meaning the same thing' - *unless specifically stated otherwise*

Chapter 2B (next page) of the ABCX Airways Crisis Communications Plan is where you will find more information about the staff who make up the 'Corporate Communications / PR CSU'

Crisis Communications - Chapter **2B**

ABCX Airways Corporate Communications / PR Department - Crisis Support Unit

- *Insert here* details of the **CSU's Head of Department / Business Unit** (Title; name; mobile, office and home telephone numbers; FAX No; Email)

- *Insert here* details of the **Primary CSU Representative** (Title; name; mobile, office and home telephone numbers; FAX No; Email)

- *Insert here* details of the CSU Representative's **No 1 Alternate person** (Title; name; mobile, office and home telephone numbers; FAX No; Email)

- *Insert here* details of the CSU Representative's **No 2 Alternate** (Title; name; mobile, office and home telephone numbers; FAX No; Email)

- *etc.*

Reminder

Any airline emergency / crisis response will not be viable unless people (its most important resource), including the Corp Comms / PR CSU (Crisis Communications Team) are:

- Available in the required numbers and disciplines to *adequately* operate 24 / 7 for long periods (12 hour shifts to be assumed + possibly maintaining same for up to several weeks)
- *Quickly* available e.g. less than 1 to 2 hours response time on a 24 / 7 / 365 basis (24H airline ops assumed here)
- *Reliably* available 24 / 7 / 365
- *Adequately* trained, exercised etc.
- *Capable* of rapid worldwide deployment (selected elements [GO Team])

There are various methods which an airline can use to achieve the above - **but primarily an airline should have such a system in place**, which is expected to work consistently and reliably, under all envisaged circumstances

If an airline *does not* have such a system in place - its chances of effectively, efficiently etc. handling any type of major crisis will be severely impaired

Associated consequences can mean e.g. that (in extremis) the involved airline might be forced to go out of business / close down permanently

Constitution of a Typical Crisis Communications Team

Note: A large, well-resourced airline is assumed here - i.e. adequate manpower, facilities, budget etc.

ESSENTIAL

Crisis Communications Controller (in charge of entire Crisis Communications response)
Crisis Communications Centre Manager (also deputises for Crisis Communications Controller)
Public Relations GO Team Rep(s) (if applicable)
Press Release / Statement Writer
Internal Communications Rep
Media Monitoring Rep
On-line Rep (Dark Site)
Social Networking / Media / Communications Rep
Press Office Team Leader → in charge of → Press Office Team
Press Office Team
Spokesperson(s) - available at 'home base' & elsewhere (at or as near as possible to accident site)
Communications Rep for Stakeholders (other than media & internal communications)
TV & Radio Bids Rep
Admin + ICT (General) Support + Log Keeper Teams
Website & Social Networking / Media / Communications - Technical Support Rep

DESIRABLE

Fast Facts + FAQs Rep
International Rep
Third Party Specialist (Expert) Support e.g. Crisis Communications / Reputational Consultant(s)
Translators

Note: For airlines with *insufficient* manpower to *individually* man the above positions / tasks, an alternative solution *must* be found. The options are limited and might be somewhat unsatisfactory - but consider:

- Doubling or tripling-up task allocation per individual e.g. a minimum of 5 persons could form a basic Crisis Communications Team if 'tripling-up' is implemented. (But you must now consider further what happens at the end of the first [crisis response] duty shift)?

- Employing third party '(external) crisis communications specialists' (Where appropriate. Such specialists should be retained / engaged as part of the *pre-planning* process)

- Forming mutual crisis support alliances with e.g. other local airlines, the local airport, local Ground Handlers etc. In such cases manpower could be provided by each 'partner' for crisis communications *training* (**essential**) - and then pooled to form a crisis communications team for use by any partner 'in need' during *actual* crisis response

Schematic - Typical **Crisis Communications Tea**m (NB: well-resourced airline [manpower, budget etc.] assumed)

CMC located staff

CCC located staff

CRISIS DIRECTOR (Located Crisis *Management* Centre - CMC)

Crisis Communications Controller (Located Crisis *Management* Centre - CMC)

Admin + Log + IT Support

Crisis Communications Centre Manager (Located Crisis *Communications* Centre - CCC)

Spokesperson(s) + Support

Crisis Communications - GO Team

Press Officer Team Leader

On-line Technical Support Rep

On-line + Social Media Rep

Statement Writer

Internal Comms Rep

Media Monitoring Rep

TV & Radio Bids Rep

'Other' Stakeholders Rep

Press Officers

Fast Facts / FAQ Rep International Rep Translators

Third Party Specialist Support

PR Agencies
Crisis Communications & Reputational 'Expert' Consultants
Web Design & Content Support etc.
Media Monitoring (including Social Media)

Note - Crisis *Management* Centre & Crisis *Communications* Centre are typically ***NOT*** to be co-located

Simplified Terms of Reference (Crisis Response - re a Catastrophic Aircraft Accident Scenario)

Typical Crisis Communications Team (Large, well-resourced airline assumed here)

ESSENTIAL

Admin + **Log Keeper** + **ICT** (Internet and Communications Technology) **Support Reps** (1 of each per shift)

- Manage all aspects of Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) admin. (CCC Administrator)
- CCC 'big picture' log keeping duties + ensuring that all other components of the Crisis Communications Team maintain individual logs (CCC Log Keeper)
- Full ICT and Telecommunications support (via ICT Crisis Support Unit)
- Admin, Log Keeper and ICT Support Reps operate from airline's *Crisis Communications Centre* when on duty
- ICT 'mobile' support available at 5 minute's notice max - for all periods when CCC is 'active'
- CCC Log keeper to retain full familiarity with *all* aspects of airline's Crisis Comms Plan (CCP)
- CCC Admin person to retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's CCP
- Admin & log keeper to retain currency in all appropriate training, exercise etc. requirements

Crisis Communications Controller - CC Controller (1 per shift)

- Most *senior* Corporate Communications / PR department manager on duty
- Leads / provides *strategy* for the Crisis Comms response
- * Provides expert support and advice to the on duty Crisis Director
- Operate from the airline's *Crisis Management Centre (CMC)* when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *all* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

> * Note: From crisis response Command and Control viewpoints - the on duty Crisis Communications Controller is *always* subordinate to the (overall) on duty Crisis Director - even for pure 'crisis communications type' matters

Crisis Communications Centre Manager - CCC Manager (1 per shift)

- Deputise for Crisis Communications Controller (CC Controller)
- Manage all aspects of *Crisis Communications Centre* (latter located separate from CMC)
- Implement & exercise *tactical* management aspects of provided Crisis Response *strategy*
- Review *all* appropriate *draft* external & internal communications. 'Trouble-shoot' as required e.g. go back to originator(s) with any queries
- Ensure that all draft external & internal communications receive appropriate and adequate legal and any other appropriate 'expert' consideration (as require) - before passing on to CCC (located at CMC) for final review, approval and release
- Ensure co-ordination and consistency of all information approved for 'release'
- Oversee effective, efficient, accurate and expeditious distribution of information
- Provide for pastoral (welfare) care issues re on-shift Crisis Comms Team staff
- Operate from the airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *all* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Crisis Comms - GO Team Rep(s) (As applicable)

- Deploy with GO Team as appropriate
- Provide Crisis Comms support / advice to deployed Leader GO Team
- Provide Crisis Comms support / advice to GO Team deployed airline spokesperson in particular (e.g. *if* no other dedicated [local] spokesperson support person available)
- Provide Crisis Comms support & advice to rest of deployed GO Team in general
- Provide Crisis Comms support & advice to locally based airline and other appropriate persons (at GO Team destination)
- Liaise & co-ordinate with local crisis comms teams sharing an 'interest' with the airline in the crisis response efforts underway e.g. local airport; local emergency services; local government; local PR agency (agencies); local reputational consultant(s); local partner airlines; local ground handling agent etc.
- Provide regular SITREPs (situation reports) to CCC Manager (CCCM) at airline HQ
- Troubleshoot local crisis comms problems as cleared by CCM - or otherwise on own initiative
- In extremis and when so directed by CCC Manager - act as on-site airline spokesperson
- Operate from airline's 'GO Team - Deployed Ops Control Centre' (DOCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *all* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training, exercise and specific GO Team requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Press Release / Statement Writer (1 per shift)

- Draft press releases / statements, updates and other written material e.g. press conference statements; letters of sympathy / condolence etc.
- Prepare draft 'fast facts' / FAQs (frequently asked questions) etc. in absence of a dedicated person assigned to this role
- When 'drafting' as per above, ensure continual and accurate / correct co-ordination and consistency of all communications
- Submit all drafts to CCC Manager for review
- Arrange for translation of the above into appropriate language(s) - as required / available
- Operate from airline HQ's Crisis Communications Centre when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Internal Communications Rep (1 per shift)

- Draft all primary, _internal_ comms material i.e. as originating in the CCC
- Provide advice about / _initial_ approval of all other internal comms material e.g. from HR CSU (for general staff), Flight Ops CSU (for flight-crew), Cabin Crew CSU (for cabin-crew) - etc.
- Ensure continual co-ordination / consistency of internal comms - with all other appropriate forms of associated crisis comms in use / under preparation etc.
- Operate from the airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Media Monitoring Rep (1 per shift)

- Monitor appropriate TV, Radio, On-line, Press etc. output re the crisis (consider using an appropriate [external / third party] specialist media monitoring / analysis agency - and / or software tool, as / if appropriate)
- Provide consolidated reports on the above to the CCC Manager - at pre-agreed times
- Advise CCC Manager immediately of 'significant' media outputs - especially if inaccurate / potentially harmful etc.
- Where necessary, request extra support e.g. for translation / interpretation duties
- Operate from the airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

On-line Content Rep (1 per shift)

- Load and manage all web site content related to the crisis - including 'dark site' content
- Re-draft any content meant for web site entry prior to publishing, if / as appropriate

  Note: The latter is done purely to 'technically' *format* the information ready for website display purposes - if required. The overall content & layout of all such information should **not** be changed without permission of the CCC Manager

- Oversee technical aspects of effective, efficient, expeditious etc. website comms - including oversight of web server(s) capacity - to ensure that latter is always adequate for what is required
- Continually co-ordinate web site content with all other forms of crisis comms in use (as relevant) - so as to ensure absolute consistency
- Produce (and / or arrange for) versions of dark site content to be produced in appropriate language(s) (as required) - in addition to the (default) English language versions
- Operate from the airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Social Networking / Communications / Media Rep (1 per shift)

- Upload and manage (relevant) social networking / comms etc. media content re the crisis - including 'dark site' content (it is today important for associated social networking / comms / media etc. to be additionally provided / uploaded etc. in 'dark site' format [i.e. similar to a 'dark site' version / operation of an airline's website] during emergency / crisis response ops)
- Re-draft any content meant for social media entry prior to publishing, if / as appropriate

  Note: The latter is done purely to 'technically' *format* the information ready for social media display purposes - if required. The overall content & layout of all such information must **not** be changed without permission of the CCC Manager)

- Oversee effective, efficient & expeditious social media type comms / ops
- Continually co-ordinate social media content with all other forms of crisis comms in use - so as to ensure absolute consistency between same
- Operate from airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Press Office Team Leader (1 per shift)

- Manage 'Press Officer' Team - including manpower and shift requirements etc.
- Oversee effective, efficient and expeditious communications with *media* stakeholders
- Deputise for Crisis Communications Centre Manager
- Operate from airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with <u>*all*</u> aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Press Office Team (as many persons as the airline can practically spare - ideally up to about 10 per shift for the larger airline with adequate, associated staff)

- Take / make telephone calls from / to *media* stakeholders
- Provide a similar service using other forms of communication except social media
- Pass on the need for any actions / responses required to the Press Office Team Leader
- Prioritise the passing on of the need for action / response as per above e.g. due pending deadlines for callers etc.
- Provide an effective, efficient, expeditious and courteous service
- Only engage with the media to the extent briefed by the Press Office Team Leader
- Ensure calls are returned in a timely way - where any undertaking so to do has been made
- Operate from the airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

> Note: Press Officers might comprise specially trained and exercised '*volunteer*' airline staff - i.e. **not** typically being part of the Corporate Communications / PR Department itself

Spokesperson(s) (Numbers as required by actual circumstances 'on the day')

- Generally speaks on behalf of the airline at press conferences, TV / radio / social media interviews etc.
- Operate from any location as required by actual circumstances 'on the day' (including possible GO Team deployment)
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Be specifically pre-trained and pre- exercised for the role
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

> Note: Spokesperson(s) are *not necessarily* part of the airline's Corporate Communications / PR Department e.g. very senior management often undertake this responsibility. The principle is 'the more serious the emergency / crisis - the more senior the spokesperson'. In extremis, senior and relevant members of e.g. 'the' national government may take on this responsibility

'Other' Stakeholders Rep (1 per shift)

- Oversee effective, efficient and expeditious comms with *non-media* type stakeholders (but *not* including 'internal communications')
- Operate from airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *all* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate / associated training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

TV & Radio Bids Rep (1 per shift)

- Co-ordinate and facilitate TV & radio requests (e.g. for interviews)
- Implement above under direction of CCC Manager
- Operate from the airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Web and Social Net-working / Communications etc. - Technical Support Rep (1 per shift)

- Provide / arrange for appropriate 24 / 7 web site(s), social media site(s) etc. technical support
- Manage web site resources and systems to prevent 'server meltdown / lock-up'
- Implement and operate (technical aspects only) the 'dark site'
- Implement and operate (technical aspects only) the 'social media site(s)'
- Operate from the airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty (and / or other location(s) as required by actual circumstances 'on the day')
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

> Note: The technical web support rep does *not* originate or gain approval for the material which he / she loads onto the dark site (in this respect they basically just 'do what they are told' by the CCC Manager and / or On-line Content Rep and / or Social Networking / Communications Rep)

DESIRABLE

Fast Facts + Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) **Rep** (1 per shift)

- Prepare and update 'fast facts', FAQ and similar type information
- Operate from airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

> Note: If short on manpower - the 'press release / statement writer' (see page 24) is to *additionally* assume this role

International Rep (1 per shift)

- Direct / co-ordinate / liaise etc. - with *international* partners (e.g. alliance and codeshare partners; mutual crisis support partners etc.) and relevant, contracted third parties (e.g. PR Agents; reputation consultants etc.), as appropriate to crisis circumstances on the day
- Operate from airline's Crisis Communications Centre (CCC) when on duty
- Retain full familiarity with *relevant* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Note: If short on manpower - the 'other stakeholders' rep (see page 27) is to *additionally* assume this role

Spokesperson Support (as required by actual circumstances 'on the day')

- Liaise with the 'writer' to prepare all briefing materials for the spokesperson, including key messages and pre-prepared FAQs
- Rehearse the spokesperson in the use of key messages and provide advice on his / her delivery - as required (also provide advice on 'appropriate dress' etc. - as required)
- Ensure that venue for press conference / interview is fully set up and fit for purpose - including size, access, security, seating, lighting, sound system, ICT equipment in use, power supplies, facilities for journalists etc.
- Arrange for translators / interpreters where appropriate (brief them accordingly)
- Take responsibility for 'meeting and greeting' journalists and camera crews - including distribution of FAQs and 'fast facts' sheets
- Attend each press conference / interview with the spokesperson, noting any key questions and feeding back to the Crisis Communications Centre Manager

- Ensure that a 'quick getaway' route / facility has been put in place for spokesperson
- Undertake follow-up with journalists who remain e.g. providing more background information etc.
- Retain full familiarity with *all* aspects of the airline's Crisis Communications Plan
- Retain currency in all appropriate training and exercise requirements
- Maintain own log of events

Note 1: Where manpower is short - the CCC Manager will appoint an 'appropriate CCT person' to *additionally* take on this role

Note 2: Manpower permitting, a (*separate*) '*spokesperson support person*' should also deploy with any *GO Team* (if deployed) - in order to provide similar support to the primary GO Team spokesperson

Third Party (External) **Specialist** (Expert) **Support** (as required by actual circumstances 'on the day')

- Tasks and locations as required by Crisis Communications Controller and / or CCC Manager

Translators / Interpreters (numbers and languages as required by actual circumstances 'on the day')

- Tasks and locations as directed by CCC Manager

Deliberately Blank

Draft (Template) - '*Holding*' **Press Release** (major airline accident / incident)

- An initial, 'holding' press release should be disseminated ASAP if a major aircraft accident / incident has (or might have) occurred - ***BUT*** where reliable facts are 'not yet' available or (*if available*) are vague / subject to confirmation etc. An adaptation of the boxed template info further below can be used to ***pre***-formulate such an initial holding press release

- The holding press release should be issued within 30-60 minutes ***maximum*** of initial accident/incident notification to the airline + subsequent press releases ASAP thereafter

- The holding press release *may* need to be signed off by 'higher authority' before issue. Associated legal / expert advice *may* also be required. In principle, all of this is to be accomplished as part of ***pre-planning*** (i.e. with required pre-approvals already in place) - and ***not*** 'on the day' itself

- Simultaneous with release to the media, the holding press release should be posted online (website, social media etc. [as appropriate]) and also distributed to 'all staff' in the form of e.g. an 'internal airline communication'

- Consider ***pre***-preparation ('pre-canned' etc.) of holding press releases so that they can be accessed and issued remotely (e.g. via mobile / cell [smart] phone) and rapidly (e.g. the draft holding press release below - [already ***pre***-**approved** for release] might suit such a purpose)

Date / Time: [insert]

Press Release No: [insert]

A (possible) incident has been reported today (*date*) involving Flight ABC *xxx* from (*departure airport*) to (*destination airport*) - with a scheduled date / time of departure of (*insert appropriate date / time [incl. whether local date / time; GMT date / time etc.]*)

ABCX Airways is activating its emergency response plan and centre as a precaution. Our primary concern right now is for all on board this flight and their associated families, relatives and friends

More information will be released as soon as possible and will also be available via:

www.abcxairways.com

- Ends -

Example Only

Draft (Template) - *First* '**Follow-up** Press Release' (major airline accident / incident)

- This and all such subsequent press releases will typically need to be signed off by airline 'higher authority' before issue. Legal advice on the content, 'tone' etc. of such messages will be required
- Ensure that 'personal / sensitive' type information is handled in accordance with any applicable laws, regulations, best practices, customs and culture, company policy etc. - where possible
- Simultaneously with release to the media, this press release should be posted online (website & social media [as appropriate]) and distributed to 'all staff' as an internal airline communication
- Further 'follow-up' press releases should be 'similarly handled'

Date / Time: [insert]   Press Release No: [insert]

ABCX Airways regrets to advise that its flight [*insert flight number*] scheduled to depart from [*insert origin airport name and country*] at [*insert scheduled date / time of departure + state time zone used*] bound for [*insert destination airport and country*] has been involved in an [*incident / accident*] at [*insert location*], at [*insert day / date / time + state time zone used*]

Our main priority now is to provide appropriate assistance to all those who were on board the aircraft - together with their associated families, relatives and friends

We are working closely with the appropriate authorities in [*insert country*] and the UK and have issued an emergency telephone number for anyone who may be concerned that family, relatives and friends might have been involved in this [*incident / accident*]. More information will be released as soon as possible and will also be available on:

www.abcxairways.com

Information telephone line for potential families, relatives and friends (**ENGLISH**) [*insert details here*]

Media (incident information) telephone line: + 44 (0)845 075 0xxx (media calls only please)

Note - the contact information given above for use by potential 'families, relatives and friend's should **NOT** be used by the *media* and / or by the *general public* (unless someone genuinely believes that he / she has some form of valid relationship and / or relevant information re any person who might possibly have been on board the involved flight / aircraft **AND** / **OR** who might have essential / otherwise useful information regarding the *incident* / *accident* itself)

Notes to Editors:

- Ends -

Example Only Draft (Template) *Second* 'Follow-up' Press Release' (major incident / accident)

Date / Time: [insert]   Press Release No: [insert]

ABCX Airways confirms that its flight [*insert flight number*] had [*insert number*] passengers and [*insert numbers*] crew on board. No further details are yet available

The airline's crisis management centre is now fully activate - manned by a team of appropriately trained / exercised managers and staff, providing direction of / to our response

(*Insert when appropriate*) A flight carrying our specialist airline staff is being prepared at *xxxxx* [has departed *xxxxx*] to provide additional assistance and support at / near to the accident location

We are taking appropriate action re all those who had been on board the *accident* / *incident* flight - and to inform / assist their associated families, relatives and friends worldwide

A * dedicated call / contact / info centre has been opened by ABCX Airways specifically to communicate with persons genuinely believing that they may have had family / relatives / friends on board the aircraft involved -— and / or who might otherwise provide useful information re the *accident* / *incident*

More information will be released as soon as possible and will also be available on:

www.abcxairways.com

All of us at ABCX Airways extend sincere sympathies to those who had been on board flight *xxx* - and also to their associated families, relatives and friends around the world

* Information line for families, relatives and friends (**ENGLISH**) [*insert details as appropriate*]

Information line for families, relatives and friends (**TURKISH**) [*insert details as appropriate*]

Media (incident information) telephone line: + 44 (0)845 075 0*xxx* (**media calls only please**)

Note - the contact information given above for use by potential 'families, relatives and friend's should **NOT** be used by the *media* and / or by the *general public* (unless someone genuinely believes that he / she has some form of valid relationship and / or relevant information re any person who might possibly have been on board the involved flight / aircraft **AND** / **OR** who might have essential / otherwise useful information regarding the *incident* / *accident* itself)

Notes to Editors:

- Ends -

Example Only Draft (Template) *Third* '**Follow-up** Press Release' (major incident / accident)

Date / Time: [insert]   Press Release No: [insert]

Boeing 777, registered *G-W**** and operating as flight ABC *xxx* from London Heathrow (UK) to Istanbul (Turkey) today [*date*], ditched in the sea about 10km south of Istanbul's Ataturk Airport. The incident occurred at around 1015 GMT / UTC. The weather was good. The cause of the accident is currently unknown

The accident aircraft is reported to have been lining up for its final approach to runway 35 Right at Ataturk, when it disappeared from radar. No emergency call was heard

There were 300 passengers on board, including 2 infants. 2 pilots and 14 cabin crew were operating the flight. Rescue helicopters and maritime emergency services are currently at the scene. Whilst details of casualties are still coming in we have been advised that any injured persons found will be taken to local hospitals

The airline's crisis centre at *xxxxx* is under the direct management of its Chief Executive, Mr *yyyyy yyyyyyy*. A relief flight carrying ABCX Airways specialist staff plus the airline's humanitarian assistance team has already departed *xxxxx* in order to provide additional local assistance and support at Istanbul / wherever needed

Powered by two *xxxx xxxxx xxxx* engines, G-W*** was delivered new to the airline in September 200*xx*. It has accumulated *xxxx* total flying hours, involving *zzzz* take-offs and landings. It is and has always been ABCX Airways standard practice to maintain its aircraft and engines to the strictest standards stipulated by the relevant manufacturers and airworthiness authorities

The flight's Captain has been with the airline for xx years, accumulating 7,500 B777 hours and 23,000 total hours on all types. The First Officer has 2,200 B777 hours, 7,000 total - and has been with us for xx years

Mr *yyyyyy* said earlier today: "………… *I speak for everyone at ABCX Airways in saying how devastated we are by this tragic event. We are, and will continue to do, everything possible to assist those who had been on board the flight together with their associated families, relatives and friends worldwide. The safety of our customers and crew is always our first and foremost concern. A full, independent investigation into the cause(s) of the accident has already started. ABCX Airways will, of course, be co-operating fully with same …………"*

More information will be released as soon as possible and will also be available on www.abcxairways.com

Emergency information line for families, relatives and friends (**ENGLISH**) [*insert contact details here*]

Incident information line for families, relatives and friends (**TURKISH**) [*insert contact details here*]

ABCX Airways Press Office [*insert contact details here*] (**media** related calls only please)

Note - the contact information given above for use by potential 'families, relatives and friend's should **NOT** be used by the *media* and / or by the *general public* (unless someone genuinely believes that he / she has some form of valid relationship and / or relevant information re any person who might possibly have been on board the involved flight / aircraft **AND / OR** who might have essential / otherwise useful information regarding the *incident* / *accident* itself)

Notes to Editors Mr *yyyyyy* will be chairing a **press conference** at [*insert exact location*] - at 1200 UTC today

- Ends –

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IMPORTANT

As time passes post-accident, the involved airline(s) will typically acquire more and more information about 'what happened' - including, in all probability, the identifications, status *(missing; dead; injured; uninjured; unknown)* and location *(not known; at accident site / mortuary / hospital / hotel etc.)* of those who had been on board the accident flight and / or of those killed, injured or traumatized on the ground *(ground victims)* as a ***direct*** consequence of the accident aircraft hitting the ground / equivalent event

Many airlines are required to abide by fairly strict rules *(law and / or regulation)* in how such 'sensitive' type information is communicated. Where there are no 'rules' - best practice *(guided by any **equivalent** legal / regulatory requirements)* prevails amongst many *(but not all)* airlines

In such circumstances it is VITAL that press statements / releases and any other communications of a *personal and / or sensitive* nature are ***firstly provided to associated families, relatives and friends*** *(if practicably possible)* ***before*** being released to the media / into the public domain

Note, however, that there are a very small number of countries where it is normal *(and expected practice)* to release the names and status of accident victims ***into the public domain*** as soon as such details become available. This is typically legal in such countries and, again, local custom and culture expects it - ***even where the victims are not from said countries***

There will also be some locations *(usually but **not** uniquely in 'developing / least developed' countries)* where no viable practices exist whatsoever, re any of the above - whether legal, regulatory, best practice, custom or culture etc. If so, expect 'the worst' in situations concerning the handling of associated 'personal and / or sensitive' information

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WARNING - Crisis related communications with involved accident *victims* and their 'loved ones' (i.e. *associated [non-flying] family, relatives and friends for latter*) should (as a crisis comms strategy element) take priority over all other forms of crisis comms - unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise. Accordingly, the 'crisis comms team' must work closely and consistently with all agencies (internal and external) providing humanitarian, welfare, financial, information & other assistance to victims and loved ones - so as to effectively communicate details of same to the latter as a *primary* priority - and then, as a secondary priority *only*, to the media and other interested parties

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The accident airline should explain clearly to associated FR (at the earliest possible opportunity) that its intent is to provide the 'latest' crisis related news / information to them ***before*** releasing same (if permitted) into the public domain. FR should also be advised that, ***where possible***, said information will be delivered face to face / by direct telephone call - where circumstances so permit / allow

BUT……………… in order to ensure that FR ***do*** receive such notification ***before*** public release - it ***may*** be necessary (at times) to use teleconference, email, text message, social media etc. - where / if face to face / telephone contact is not possible 'on the day' (for whatever reason)

FR who might express concern re the latter should be advised that 'the alternative' potentially exposes them to acquiring such information 'second hand and late' - typically via the media

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Some simple 'Rules' related to Airline Crisis Communications

(***Catastrophic Aircraft Accident*** type situation / context and Similar Severity Events)

1. **No Excuse for being Unprepared**

   Many airlines are still (today) totally / partially unprepared re planning to deal with a major crisis - both in *general* crisis response terms and also as related specifically to *crisis communications*. Where such preparations / plans *<u>do</u>* actually exist (and, again, in many airlines they don't!) they can sometimes / often fall into several 'undesirable' categories:

   1. The plan is not fit for purpose due inadequacy in general
   2. The plan is not fit for purpose due not being comprehensive enough
   3. The plan is not fit for purpose due over-complication
   4. Good, average or bad - the plan just 'sits on a shelf' - year after year
   5. Potential (associated) crisis responders are inadequately trained, exercised etc/

   Being unprepared for crisis comms is inexcusable and typically reflects the importance (or rather, the opposite) placed on company brand, image and reputation

   In reality, the 'preparedness buck' stops with the airline's top manager, regardless of airline size, operations, complexity, individual workload etc. Remember that it can take a 'business lifetime' to build up a good brand, image and reputation - and just hours to destroy / seriously damage it

2. **The Threats are Typically Known - so Identify, List and Prepare for them**

   Brainstorm (with all concerned parties - internal, external / third party) and identify the top (say 5 to 10) threats facing the airline etc. Then place them in order of 'impact severity' from crisis communications viewpoints. Regularly review and update said threat list. Plan (and keep on re-planning as required) for how to adequately respond to each such threat – as appropriate

   Said 'brainstorming team' will typically include a PR expert, specific subject matter expert(s) (e.g. flight operations; legal; aircraft engineering; flight safety; insurance etc.), a senior management rep(s) (crisis communications 'champion'), an appropriate legal expert(s), an 'internal communications expert e.g. HR (if not covered by the PR expert), parent group rep (if appropriate), external (third party) specialist expertise / advice, anyone else (as appropriate to actual circumstances 'on the day') etc.

3. **Know What You Want To Say** (and how) **Before *'They'* Ask**

   Identifying the relevant threats is just part of the battle. Preparing for associated, anticipated questions and similar is another matter. Accordingly, the next step is to identify and document anticipated questions (including worst case 'nightmare scenario' type questions) related to each identified threat. It will be necessary to be as wide reaching and ultra-critical as is reasonably possible, when accomplishing this task

If you have successfully identified and understood the types of questions you're likely to face, *pre-preparation* of (typical) good, appropriate answers, key messages etc. should be so much easier 'on the day' - as will be the pre-preparation and distribution of e.g. template press releases, FAQs / 'Fast Facts' etc.

Crisis comms training, exercising etc. (and, indeed, the 'real' thing) should be based (to a reasonable degree) on the conclusions reached as per the last 3 paras above

4. **Understand that Effective Crisis Comms *cannot* typically be accomplished 'Ad Hoc'**

It is highly likely that only an *extremely* small percentage of airline executives etc. *might* be able to handle crisis communications with little or no preparation. As this latter risk will be unacceptable to the vast majority of airlines, all such executives (from the top down) must be adequately 'pre-prepared' before choosing / being chosen to 'stand in front of the media' etc. Such *pre-preparation* includes associated **training** and **exercising** - over and over again, at reasonably regular intervals

5. **3 'First Aid' Key Messages**

Here are 3 example key messages which might be 'useful' during the early phases of any major crisis - if no other (more appropriate) key messages are initially available:

"*We have a plan to deal with* ...." (You really **do** need to have such a plan in place of course! [Trained and exercised for etc.])

"*Our hearts and prayers go out to those* ...." (Demonstrate *genuine* compassion / sympathy / empathy etc. - for crisis victims and their family, relatives and friends; for others e.g. seriously inconvenienced by 'the' crisis etc.)

"*We have immediately undertaken our own investigation to make sure that we* ...." (Commit to finding out what went wrong [insofar as is permitted by the appropriate authorities etc.] and to taking the necessary steps to put it right – also ensuring that it doesn't / won't happen again)

For the above messages to 'work', they must be *backed up with actions* e.g. saying that 'you care about your employees' doesn't work if you don't or cannot demonstrate same

Another view on the above (some other 'first aid' type key messages) might be based e.g. on how New York Mayor Rudi Giuliani handled the intensely difficult crisis communications associated with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in September 2011:

'..........*former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani was a "poster child" for effective crisis communications during and after the September 11 terrorist attacks. He knew what was happening. He was believable. He was an authority figure with a human face. His communications skills earned him a larger-than-life role and the world, not just New York City, looked to him for reassurance and answers. He was calm, humane, provided regular updates on the situation / responses being made - and was seen throughout the city (on the street, at the site, with citizens etc.). Most importantly, he made himself available, around-the-clock and his visibility itself sent the message that he was in control of the situation...........*'

As per above, the basic 'crisis communications strategy' adopted by Mayor Giuliani and his team was based on the following key messages:

- ▪ ***This is what we know***
- ▪ ***This what we don't know***
- ▪ ***This is what we are doing***
- ▪ ***This is what we want you*** (targeted audiences) ***to do***
- ▪ ***Here are the core safety / similar messages for you all to be aware of***

6. **Legal** Opinion *versus* **Public** Opinion

Lawyers etc. typically play an important part in any crisis response, including crisis communication elements. Their associated counsel / advice on legal matters can be vital in helping to guide those directly involved

However, there are two types of 'court' in this world - and the *'court of public opinion'* might be just as powerful as the 'court of law'

The biggest challenge facing crisis response leaders is balancing decisions based on these latter, two parameters - as what may work for one might not necessarily work for the other.

The relevant question here (taken in the relevant context) is simply *'………… what is the smartest thing I can do to protect our brand / image / reputation…………?'*

Winnin*g a **legal** victory won't necessarily restore any trust **lost** in the **public domain**. Whilst both are important in their own ways – one needs to choose wisely!

7. **You've got 48 Hours** (or do you really mean about 5 minutes?)

A crucial element of crisis communications is rapid response - with the first 48 hours or so (approximately - depending on actual circumstances) typically being the most critical period. If 'the' airline is not ahead of the crisis within this timeframe, it might be that any adverse crisis communications backlash becomes overwhelming / non-recoverable

A major reason why entities fail to manage crisis comms effectively / efficiently is because they don't recognise that *'…………… when something "bad" happens, a communications void is created ……………'* and if the entity does not fill this void, someone else (the media; the public; armchair experts etc.) will - and what they come up with and share can sometimes be inaccurate and / or incomplete

Overcoming a negative perception (once established) can be difficult, thus the reason to 'get out there' as fast and frequently as practically / sensibly possible

It is said anecdotally that *'…………………it's impossible to over-communicate in a crisis. You can say the wrong thing, but you can never over-communicate……………………'*

IMPORTANT NOTE - The advent of social media now means that the '48 hours' time period referred to above is no longer credible i.e. a much shorter time period now applies. In relation to a 'catastrophic aircraft accident' type scenario this could now be around 1 to 2 hours or even significantly less (i.e. minutes) - depending on actual circumstances prevailing 'on the day'

8. **Leadership, Delegation and Empowerment**

Effective and efficient crisis comms requires high calibre leadership, backed up by a competent (knowledgeable, well-trained, exercised etc.) supporting team. However, if one and / or the other get disconnected from their associated, prime responsibilities - said crisis comms response is at risk of suffering adversely

The crisis comms team leader should effectively exercise a *strategic* role - with the supporting 'team' providing *tactical* and *sub-tactical* (operational) roles e.g. the 'team' formulates a particular (draft) crisis comms strategy / direction + appropriate key messages - which are then approved by the team leader (+ possibly higher authority if so required)

It is now for the individuals in the supporting team(s) to execute the approved strategy and key messages according to the degree of empowerment / delegation assigned to them. Too little and the leader will end up doing all of the work - too much and the team will 'run the show'

9. **Get Outside Help**

When a crisis strikes, seeking an (appropriately qualified and / or experienced) outsider's (third party) *expert* perspective can be beneficial - particularly when considering crisis comms

This expert's role is not to 'call the shots'. Rather, he / she will typically provide 'high quality' advice and support to a team leader - typically from a perspective that few inside the company might be able so to do

Just because 'you' bring in outside, expert counsel / advice doesn't necessarily mean you can't handle the crisis. It does mean, however, that you acknowledge your weaknesses (we all have them) and are smart enough to do something about them

10. **Remember**

…………………all of the above should be pre-prepared, prepared and regularly reviewed (for actually being able to do what it is supposed to do)- which is infinitely more preferable than trying to 'wing it' on the day

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Crisis Communications - **Some Useful Links**

Avoiding a Social Media Firestorm - Sep 2020
https://www.iedp.com/articles/avoiding-a-social-media-firestorm/

How Social Media is 'elevating' Crisis Communications - March 2014
https://socialfresh.com/how-social-media-is-elevating-airline-crisis-communication/

When Tragedy Strikes, does Social Media Provide the Human Touch? - June 2013
https://itsacrisisnowwhat.com/2013/06/05/social-media-fails-and-guidelines-in-crises/

19 Companies which made Serious Social Media Blunders - May 2013
https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ariellecalderon/19-companies-that-made-huge-social-media-fails

The 10 Steps of Crisis Communications - 2016
https://www.bernsteincrisismanagement.com/the-10-steps-of-crisis-communications/

Making a Crisis Worse: The 10 Biggest Mistakes in Crisis Communications
https://www.bernsteincrisismanagement.com/the-biggest-mistakes-crisis-communications/

Top 10 Aviation Crises handled via Social Media - March 2012
https://simpliflying.com/blog/top-10-crisis-management-case-studies-how-social-media-can-help-airlines-deal-with-their-worst-nightmares/

Effective Claims Management: The Role of the Crisis Communications Strategy - Nov 2011
https://mccagueborlack.com/emails/articles/subrogation_crisis.html

Practical PR Strategies for Reputation Management and Company Survival - 2008
Crisis Communications (Book [Requires Purchase])
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/16898232-crisis-communication

MH 370 - Case History - 'Damage Limitation' - 2015

https://www.electricairwaves.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/25.-Case-History-Malaysia-Airlines-2014.pdf

Crisis Communications Myth-busting - 2016

https://www.prweek.com/article/1380016/crisis-communications-myth-busting

Culture and Crisis Communications - 2015

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/culture-crisis-communication-ella-minty-chart-pr-mcipr-miod-mspe

Conflicting Crisis Comms Comment with regard to the Germanwings Disaster of 24 March 2015

https://www.thedrum.com/news/2015/03/28/pr-experts-applaud-lufthansas-crisis-communications-approach-germanwings-disaster

Versus:

https://timoluege.medium.com/how-germanwings-failed-at-crisis-communications-8466c59fb6d0

IATA Info Article - 2016 - Crisis Communications

(IATA - Crisis Comms in the Digital Age - 2016)

https://www.iata.org/en/publications/crisis-communications-guidelines

8 Step Guide to a Social Media Strategy - November 2022

https://marketinginsidergroup.com/social-media/8-steps-to-an-effective-social-media-strategy/

For Airlines, Real-Time Crisis Communications Becomes Even More Real - Apr 2018

https://www.ketchum.com/for-airlines-real-time-crisis-communications-becomes-even-more-real/

More Example Crisis Communications - **How Virgin handled** (initially) **the loss of one of its** (in development) '**virgin galactic spaceships**' on 31 October 2014

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/10/31/virgin-galactics-spaceshiptwo-suffers-in-flight-anomaly_n_6083936.html?icid=maing-grid7%7Cukt3%7Cdl1%7Csec1_lnk1%26pLid%3D304460

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/10/31/richard-branson-spaceship_n_6084512.html?1414787607

https://admiralconsultancy.com/why-is-virgins-crisis-management-so-good/

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Real Life Case Study of 'Darksite' Use in Practise

Flydubai flight FZ 981 crashed at Rostov on Don (Russia) during the early hours of 19 March 2016. All 62 persons on board perished immediately upon impact with the ground

To view screenshots taken from the flydubai darksite in the first few days following the accident (and some related social media [Facebook] information too) - please see the below:

CASE STUDY

For a real life case study involving airline use of the 'dark site' - see:

https://www.aviationemergencyresponseplan.com/information/

When the webpage opens, scroll down until you find the article entitled:

'Information Article - Crisis Communications Strategies - use of **Dark Site & Social Media**'

Click on the title to open the document - and then see 'Part 2'